

FIELD NOTES

KITSAP'S LOCAL AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND SEASONAL NEWS

NEW SEASON, NEW ENERGY!

As winter gives way to spring, we're feeling a renewed sense of possibility. With our fields, gardens, and farms beginning to wake, there's an energy in the air that comes with longer days and rising temperatures - and we're excited to share some of KCAA's upcoming plans with you.

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our Annual Meeting on March 12th. Your thoughtful feedback will help guide our direction in 2026, with a strong interest in more learning opportunities. From livestock first aid and pest management, to beekeeping and cider making, composting, and herbalism. You also expressed interest in more off-season farmer meet-ups to help our agricultural community stay connected. We're excited to explore ways to make all of this happen.

In this issue, we'll share some exciting new plans, upcoming events, and a double-trouble Farmer Spotlight. Thank you for being here with us.

Sincerely,

The KCAA Board of Directors

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBERS:

Please join us in welcoming our newest KCAA Board Members: Erika Anderson (Treasurer), along with Ryan Crossen, Ashley Kennedy, Ron Carson, and Mary McKeirnan (Members at Large).

Each brings valuable experience, knowledge, and talent that will help advance our mission and strengthen support for agriculture in our community. Learn more about our full Board at KitsapAg.org/about



NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED TO KITSAP'S AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

On Monday, March 23rd at 10 AM, Kitsap County Commissioners Oran Root, Christine Rolfes, and Katie Walters officially adopted the resolution appointing members to the newly established Kitsap County Agricultural Advisory Council. Appointed members include:

District 1: Angela Cordiano, Mira Rosenkotz, Karissa Holcombe

District 2: Scott Hall, Gary Winn, Dawn Oien

District 3: Tonya Hirtzel, Christina Mayfield, Mickey Centeno

Some of the appointees gathered Monday morning for the adoption of the resolution.

The Council will advise Commissioners and county staff on key agricultural matters, including education, policy, land use, and economic opportunities, while serving as a collaborative forum to support the long-term sustainability and resilience of the agricultural community.

The first Ag Council meeting was held on Thursday, March 26, from 5-7 PM at the Kitsap County Administrative Building in Port Orchard. At this meeting, the Council voted in a Chair - Dawn Oien, and Vice Chair - Gary Winn, and approved Council Bylaws, Operating Guidelines, and discussed their 2026 work plan. The Council will meet on the 4th Thursday of the odd months, except when moved for a holiday.



PICTURED (L TO R): SCOTT HALL (DIST 2), DAWN OIEN (DIST 2), MICKEY CENTENO (DIST 3), AND KARISSA HOLCOMBE (DIST 1)

The Ag Council has TWO OPEN SEATS for YOUTH Representatives!

This is a great opportunity for young people who are passionate about agriculture to have a real voice in county-level conversations and decisions. Youth members sit alongside adult council members and contribute to discussions on local ag policy and programs — it's a meaningful experience that looks great on college and scholarship applications too.

What's Involved?

- **Meetings:** 4th Thursday every other month, Kitsap County Administration Building
- **Time commitment:** About 2 hours per meeting - plus 1 hour bimonthly preparation
- **Term length:** through December 2027
- **Age:** Open to students high school and college age

If you know a motivated, agriculture-interested student ready to step into a leadership role, we'd love to hear from them! Apply at: [Job Opportunities | KITSAP COUNTY](#). Note that the youth opportunities are not connected to a specific Commissioner district.

WOMEN'S WORK: THE UNTOLD STORY OF AMERICA'S FEMALE FARMERS

On Sunday, April 19th, [Friends of the Farms](#) is offering a film screening of the Documentary **Women's Work: The Untold Story of America's Female Farmers**. The film will be shown at the historic Lynwood Theatre on Bainbridge Island. Following the film, there will be a Panel Discussion and a Q&A with Audra Mulkern, Executive Producer of *Women's Work* and Founder of *The Female Farmer Project*.

The KCAA is pleased to offer 20 scholarships to attend the showing of Women's Work.

Simply purchase your ticket, send us proof of purchase, and after attending the film you'll receive a full \$25 reimbursement.

How to apply:

1. Purchase your ticket
2. Email your receipt to info@kitsapag.org
3. Use subject line: Women's Work - Film Scholarship



Scholarships are available until all 20 spots are filled.

Learn more: www.kitsapag.org/film-scholarship

Join Friends of the Farms for a Screening of the Documentary
"Women's Work: The Untold Story of America's Female Farmers"

Sunday, April 19, 2026 - 7:00pm
Historic Lynwood Theater, Bainbridge Island
Panel Discussion to follow the film
Q&A with Audra Mulkern
Executive Producer - *Women's Work*
Founder - *The Female Farmer Project*

Scan for tickets
or visit www.friendsofthefarms.org

Thank you to our sponsors: Town & Country Markets, D.A. Davidson Wealth Management, and The Harbor Public House.

KCAA HOSTS 2026 ANNUAL MEETING:

On March 12, the KCAA hosted its Annual Meeting at the Bremerton Fairgrounds, bringing together a full room of farmers, partners, and community members.



The evening began with a potluck and social hour, where attendees connected with local agricultural organizations and enjoyed a wide variety of homemade dishes. KCAA President Bob Geballe opened the meeting by introducing the Board and highlighting key committees. Guest speakers shared updates from across the county and youth from 4-H and North Kitsap FFA inspired the crowd with their stories and passion for agriculture.

The evening wrapped up with community feedback, a free raffle of locally donated goods, and plenty of conversation. Thank you to everyone who attended, and for offering valuable input to help guide our work in the year ahead. We hope you left feeling connected, energized, and excited about what's to come.

SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION: 21 KITSAP YOUTH RECEIVE AG SCHOLARSHIPS



The Kitsap Community & Agricultural Alliance (KCAA), in partnership with the Mason-Kitsap Farm Bureau, present the:

1ST ANNUAL JUNIOR LIVESTOCK YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship helps youth livestock producers get started by covering some of the up-front costs of raising an animal for the Junior Livestock auction.

Who Can Apply?

- Participants in grades K-12
- Residents of Kitsap or Mason County
- Small or large animal projects

How to Apply:

- Application at www.KitsapAg.org
- Registration opens Feb 7, 2026 and closes Feb 27, 2026

Categories:

- **Large animal** - 8 scholarships @ \$200 each
- **Small animal** - 8 scholarships @ \$100 each
- Both new and returning participants are encouraged to apply!



The **KCAA**, in partnership with **Mason-Kitsap Farm Bureau**, awarded 21 scholarships to youth in the 1st Annual **Junior Livestock Youth Scholarship** during the month of March! This scholarship was designed to help youth livestock producers get started by covering some of the up-front costs associated with raising an animal for the Junior Livestock Auction.

Congratulations to the following youth recipients!

North Kitsap

Ashley B. - market rabbits
Aurora H. - market sheep
Reagan S. - market sheep & turkey
Kylie D. - market lambs
James H. - market turkeys
Cecelia T. - market pigs
Jordyn B. - market broiler chickens
Isaiah H. - market turkey
Grady B. - market chickens

South Kitsap

Alexis B. - market poultry
Jesse R. - market broiler chickens
Gerrit M. - market lamb & turkey
Lilly R. - market birds
Violet P. - market sheep
Bodie M. - market pigs

Central Kitsap

Hayden H. - market hog
Abigail W. - market steer
Quincy B. - market hog & turkey
Anne S. - market hog
Blake S. - market steer
Lydia H. - market pig

* No applicants from Mason County this year - but we're hopeful that will change next year!

THANK YOU FOR GIVING!

We want to begin with a heartfelt THANK YOU! Thank you for believing in the work that we do and for choosing to give in support of our mission.

We set a fundraising goal of \$2,000 for the **2026 Great Give**, and your generosity blew that out of the water! We are incredibly grateful for the \$2,250 that we received this year in donations. Your contributions will allow us to expand our offerings of free classes and workshops for Kitsap farmers, while creating meaningful learning opportunities for the broader community.



With gratitude, we recognize our donors: Steven H., Wendie P., Bob G., Whitney L., Kimberly R., Courtney B., Marilyn H., Family H., Bill & Teresa L., and 2 Anonymous Donors.

FARMER SPOTLIGHT: JEN CLARK & NIKKI PARKS, ROOTS FARM



Farmers Jen Clark and Nikki Parks

You may know Jen Clark through the many roles she plays in our community - perhaps most notably as the owner of Roots Farm in Poulsbo, where she farms alongside her friend and longtime farming partner, Nikki Parks.

Together, Jen and Nikki have built not just a farm, but a thriving example of collaboration, resilience, and dedication to local agriculture. We recently had the opportunity to ask Jen about how she and Nikki got their start farming together, the lessons they've learned along the way, what they're working toward in the future, and the advice they would offer to both aspiring and fellow farmers.

Jen - how did you and Nikki first meet, and what led you to start farming together? We met about 15 years ago as homeschool moms, both wanting to give our families healthier food we could trust. Our small homestead quickly became a much bigger project as we realized how disconnected people were from their food and how important this was for health and community. After 13 growing seasons, farming together has become our shared mission: reconnecting people to real food.

How do your roles differ on the farm, and how have they evolved over time? As the owner, I focus on the bigger picture - building the vision, writing grants, creating partnerships, and developing infrastructure. Nikki keeps the day-to-day production flowing - computer/tech, crop planning, harvest, and organization. Over time we've really leaned into our strengths, which makes the farm run more smoothly, especially during the busy seasons.

What makes your partnership strong, especially during the busy seasons? Trust and shared purpose. We both care deeply about what we're doing, so even when things get stressful, we're working toward the same goal. After all these years, we just understand each other - and we laugh a lot, which honestly carries us through. We have also lived life together and weathered life challenges most friendships never do, connecting us in a very deep way. We've learned how to communicate, work through hard moments, and keep showing up for each other.

Can you tell us a little about your farm - what you grow, raise, and produce? My mission is to promote equitable food access and resilient local food systems - built through sharing food and knowledge. We cultivate a wide range of vegetables, fruits, and seeds adapted to our region. Whenever possible, we use livestock instead of gas-powered equipment for field preparation, fertilization, and pest and weed control. A core focus is building soil health and creating on-site fertility. Our goal is to secure research and education grants to enable us to donate 100% of our harvest to local food banks. Our grant projects focus on drought mitigation strategies for small farmers and developing fertility systems using local feedstocks. We are also creating several composting systems and related educational programs. We plan to offer free classes and educational materials on all these topics.

If someone visited your farm for the first time, what would surprise them most? That it's more than just a farm - it's a system. There are compost systems, animals, research trials, and education all happening together. Most people ask: "How do you do it all?" My answer is: I don't. I have a small team of long-term, dedicated people with a shared vision and mission.

Right - A view of the seasonal bounty that Roots Farm offers through their annual CSA program. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a system that connects farmers and consumers directly, allowing people to buy a "share" of a farm's harvest in advance.



(Jen, cont.)

What inspired you to diversify into things like bokashi, biochar, vermicomposting, and beekeeping? With supply chain issues, a changing climate, and inflation, local communities need to find a more sustainable way to live on our planet. We need to create our own fertility and grow food locally.

It all comes back to closing the loop. We're taking what would be waste - food scraps, wood waste, organic materials - and turning it into fertility. It makes the farm more resilient and less dependent on outside inputs. We keep bees for pollination as well as for honey production. We have also been partnering with [GRUB](#) in Olympia through a program called *Healing Through Hives* to offer free beekeeping starter packages and education to veterans on beekeeping.

What's something you're especially proud of accomplishing over the past year? Even with massive funding cuts this year, we managed to pivot and not only stay afloat but thrive. I have found my niche in scientific research. We are also putting the finishing touches on a small "commercial" vermicompost project that is funded through the Department of Ecology. We process food and paper waste from our local food bank and turn it into farm fertility. We are also offering free community classes on the topic. KCAA is our fiscal sponsor and partner on this project.



What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced as you've grown and diversified the farm? Financial sustainability is a big one. A lot of what we do is community-focused, which doesn't always generate immediate income. We are about 50% of the way towards that goal to be funded through research and education, we are funding farm operations so we can offer more free community services by way of food distribution and education. We want to teach people to grow their own food to build stronger local food systems.

How do you handle stress or burnout during peak season? I am an eternal optimist as well as having a sense of humor. Anyone that works on the farm will tell you I tell way too many dad jokes. I love to laugh and makes others laugh.

What does a typical day look like for each of you (if there is such a thing)? There isn't a typical day. It can be harvesting, teaching, fixing something, or problem-solving. It changes constantly.

[Laying hens and Muscovy ducks in the farm's last remaining original chicken house - affectionally called the "August House"](#)

How do you define success for your farm? Success, to me, is measured by impact rather than profit. It's the food we grow and get into the hands of people who need it, the waste we divert and turn into fertility, and the number of people we reach through education and community programs. Success looks like a veteran who starts keeping bees, a family that learns to grow their own food, or a research trial that proves a more sustainable farming method works. When the farm is resilient, the community is more connected to their food, and we're closing the loop on waste — that's when I know we're succeeding.

What do you wish more people understood about farming? How hard it is, you have to love what you do. People value you movie stars and athletes. Farmers should be valued, and paid, more. We feed the community.

If you could share one message with your community or customers, what would that be? Your support truly matters. When you support a local farm—through a farm share, classes, or buying local—you're helping keep real food in the community.



[A growing corn maze at sunset - Pheasant Fields Farm](#)

Seasonal Recipes
that we're loving!

Savor the Season

Cheesy Asparagus Orzo



Orzo—the "rice" of the pasta world—gets the risotto treatment in this recipe, and it's a game-changer! Aromatic leeks, savory asparagus, and sweet peas brighten this dish, while rich cream, Parmesan, and just the right amount of butter stirred in at the end make it super-luxe. The result? A velvety, flavorful spring dinner that's fresh but indulgent.

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp. plus 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 bunch of asparagus (about 1 lb.), trimmed, or tough ends cut off and peeled
- 1 large leek, halved, white and pale green parts thinly sliced
- Kosher salt
- 1 ½ cups orzo
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ½ cup dry white wine
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup frozen petite peas
- 1 oz. Parmesan, finely grated (about ½ cup)
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- ¼ cup thinly sliced fresh basil leaves, plus more for serving

Step 1:

In a large Dutch oven or heavy pot over medium-high heat, heat 2 Tbsp. oil until very hot. Arrange asparagus in pot in an even layer, cover, and cook, turning halfway through, until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Transfer asparagus to a cutting board; season with salt.

Step 2:

In same pot over medium-high heat, heat remaining 1/4 cup oil. Add leeks; season with a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring, until just softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in orzo and garlic. Cook, stirring frequently, until orzo is toasted and garlic is fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add wine and cook, scraping up any browned bits, until wine is absorbed, 2 to 3 minutes.

Step 3:

Stir in broth, 1/2 tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until orzo is tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Meanwhile, cut asparagus crosswise into 1" pieces.

Step 4:

Add peas to orzo mixture, cover, and cook until peas are warmed through, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add Parmesan, cream, and butter and stir until butter is melted. Stir in asparagus and basil; season with salt and pepper. Top with more basil, and serve!

KITSAP COUNTY FARMERS MARKETS

A few farmers markets across Kitsap County are up and running! This is the perfect time to get out, support local farms, and enjoy the community vibe.

Poulsbo Market: Saturdays, 10am-2pm Location: Gateway Fellowship Parking Lot, 18901 8th Ave NE, Poulsbo

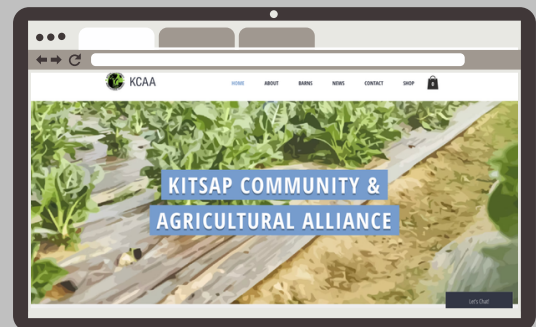
Port Orchard Market: Saturdays, 9am-2pm Location: Downtown Waterfront Marina

Bainbridge Island Market: Saturdays, 10am-2pm Location: Town Square at City Hall, 280 Madison Ave N, Bainbridge Island

Coming Soon (May 2026):

- Bremerton Community Farmers Market
- Kingston Public Market
- Seabeck Community Farmers Market

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www.KitsapAg.org